



MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

A GUIDE TO MAKING INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT YOUR CAREER

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Agenda

- Who are we?
 - Why career guidance matters?
 - Qualification levels
 - Post-16 routes
 - Money, debt and pay
 - Job security and progression
 - Steps to take now
 - Collective research!
 - Conclusion
 - Q&A
- 

Who are we?

A Doctor and an Engineer

Two brothers

Schools attended: Slough & Eton and Burnham Grammar School

Slough, born and raised

Passion to serve you and the needs of the community

Academic & Professional Experience

Years in Industry, >20 years combined uni experience

Concerned community members

Active in local grass-roots organisations and work





Why career guidance matters?

Choosing the right career early helps avoid wasting time on unsuitable studies or jobs.

It helps you make informed, realistic, and fulfilling choices about your future.

You learn about the options available to you - are A levels/Degrees the only option?

You receive insight from experienced people.

Qualification levels

Range from Entry Level (basic skills) to Level 8 (doctorate-level study)

Entry Level - Focuses on foundational learning and life skills.

Levels 1–2 - Covers qualifications like GCSE and equivalent awards.

Levels 3–5 - Includes A-Levels, vocational training, apprenticeships, and foundation degrees, common routes into employment or further education.

Levels 6–8 - Encompasses higher education qualifications such as bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.

LEVEL	QUALIFICATION		
8	NVQ 8	Doctorate	
7	NVQ 7	Master's Degree / Postgraduate	
6	Higher/ Degree Apprenticeships / NVQ 4, 5 and 6	Honour's Degree	
5		Foundation Degree, HND	Diploma in Higher Education
4		HNC	Certificate in Higher Education
3	Advanced Apprenticeship / NVQ 3	T level / BTEC Cert / Diploma	AS / A2 Levels
2	Apprenticeship / NVQ 2	BTEC First Diploma	GCSE Grades 9 - 4
1	Traineeship / NVQ 1	GCSE Grades 3 - 1	
ENTRY	Basic Skills / Skills for Life		

Post-16 Routes

Overview

A Levels

Academic qualifications usually studied after GCSEs, focused on specific subjects and leading to university or further study.

T Levels

Technical qualifications combining classroom learning with industry placements, designed to prepare students for skilled employment.

NVQs

Work-based qualifications that assess practical skills and competence in a specific job role.



Post-16 Routes

Overview

Apprenticeships

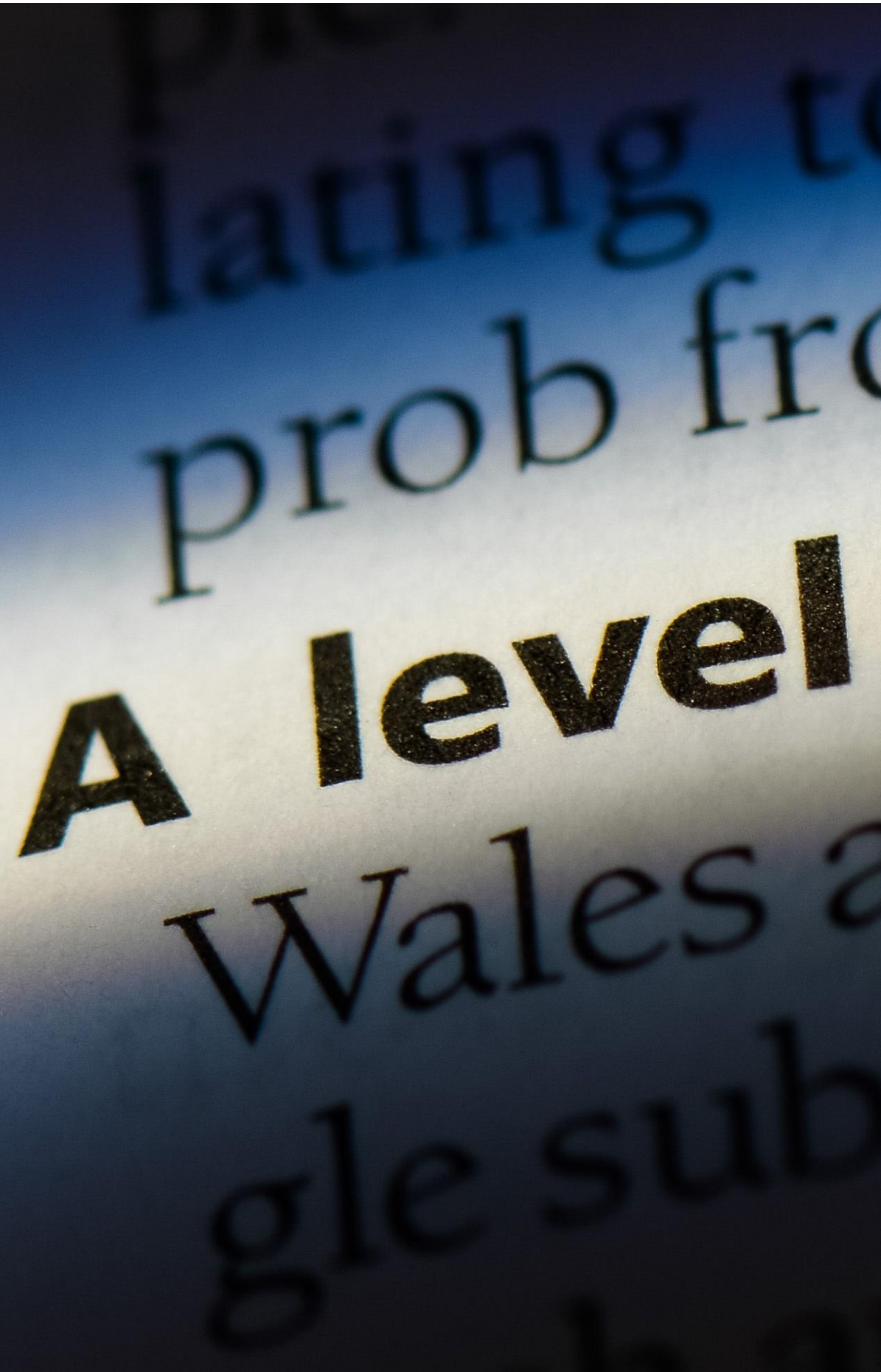
Paid training programs that combine working in a job with studying towards a qualification.

Degrees

Higher education qualifications awarded by universities, typically focusing on in-depth academic or professional study.



A Levels



What Are A Levels?

- Subject-based qualifications studied over 2 years.
- Strong route to university, higher/degree apprenticeships, or employment.
- Focused on academic learning and exams.

Entry Requirements

- Typically: 5 GCSEs at grades 9–4 (including English & Maths).
- Grade 6+ in subjects you wish to study.
- Requirements vary by school/college—always check!

Choosing Subjects

- Pick subjects you enjoy and excel in.
- Consider subjects needed for future careers (e.g., Biology for Medicine).
- Choose combinations that keep options open if undecided.

T Levels

T-level	A-Level	UCAS Points
Pass	CCC	96
Merit	BBB	120
Distinction	AAA	144
Distinction*	A*A*A*	168

What Are T Levels?

- Level 3 qualification (equivalent to 3 A Levels).
- 2-year technical programme designed with employers.
- Combines classroom learning (80%) with industry placement (20%).

Industry Placement

- Minimum of 315 hours with a real employer.
- Gain hands-on experience in your chosen field.

Progression Options

- Leads to skilled employment, higher/degree apprenticeships, or university.
- T Level grades carry UCAS points (just like A Levels).

Entry & Application

- Apply via local colleges or sixth forms offering your chosen T Level.
- Check provider websites for deadlines and subject availability.

NVQs

What Are NVQs

- Work-based qualifications that show you can do a job to industry standards.
- Focus on competence, not just theory -ideal for practical learners.

How They Work

- Assessed through real tasks at work (e.g., photos, logs, supervisor reports).
- Often delivered as part of apprenticeships, but can be taken alone.

Examples by Sector

- **Trades & Construction:** Plumbing, Electrical Installation, Bricklaying.
- **Health & Care:** Health & Social Care, Children's Development.
- **Business & Services:** Customer Service, Business Admin, Hairdressing.



	ADULT LEARNER ROUTE • Level 2 Diploma in Electrical Installations • C&G 2365-02 / EAL 600/6724/X • Level 3 Diploma in Electrical Installations • C&G 2365-03 / EAL 600/9331/6 • Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Electrotechnical Technology • C&G 2357 / EAL 501/1605/8 • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2		
	APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE <table><tr><td>INSTALLATION/MAINTENANCE ELECTRICIAN • City & Guilds 5357-23 / EAL 610/7345/2 • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2S </td><td>DOMESTIC ELECTRICIAN • City & Guilds 5393-03 / EAL 610/1335/3 • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2D </td></tr></table>	INSTALLATION/MAINTENANCE ELECTRICIAN • City & Guilds 5357-23 / EAL 610/7345/2 • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2S	DOMESTIC ELECTRICIAN • City & Guilds 5393-03 / EAL 610/1335/3 • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2D
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	EXPERIENCED WORKER ROUTE <table><tr><td>INSTALLATION/MAINTENANCE ELECTRICIAN • City & Guilds 2346-03 / EAL 603/5982/1 • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2E • Plus 5 years experience, Level 2 Diploma, 18th Edition & Level 3 Initial Verification </td><td>DOMESTIC ELECTRICIAN • City & Guilds 2347-03 / EAL 610/2859/9 • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2S • 3 years experience, Level 2 Diploma, 18th Edition & Level 3 Initial Verification and Periodic Inspection </td></tr></table>	INSTALLATION/MAINTENANCE ELECTRICIAN • City & Guilds 2346-03 / EAL 603/5982/1 • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2E • Plus 5 years experience, Level 2 Diploma, 18th Edition & Level 3 Initial Verification	DOMESTIC ELECTRICIAN • City & Guilds 2347-03 / EAL 610/2859/9 • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2S • 3 years experience, Level 2 Diploma, 18th Edition & Level 3 Initial Verification and Periodic Inspection
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	FULL TIME EDUCATION ROUTE • Level 2 Technical Qualification • C&G 8202-02 / EAL 601/4651/4 • Level 3 Technical Qualification • C&G 8710-32/33 / EAL 601/4563/8 • Apprenticeship OR Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Electrotechnical Technology (as above) • END POINT ASSESSMENT: AM2S or AM2		

Apprenticeships



What Are Apprenticeships?

- Paid jobs with structured training.
- Combine work experience with study towards a qualification (Levels 2–7).
- Available in hundreds of careers - from engineering to healthcare to business.

Pay & Costs

- Minimum wage: £7.55/hr (age 16–17, first year); many employers pay more.
- No tuition fees—training funded by employer/government.
- Access to student discounts and support.

Progression

- Can lead to permanent roles, promotions, or higher-level apprenticeships.
- Degree apprenticeships offer full university degrees while working.

Degree



What is a Degree?

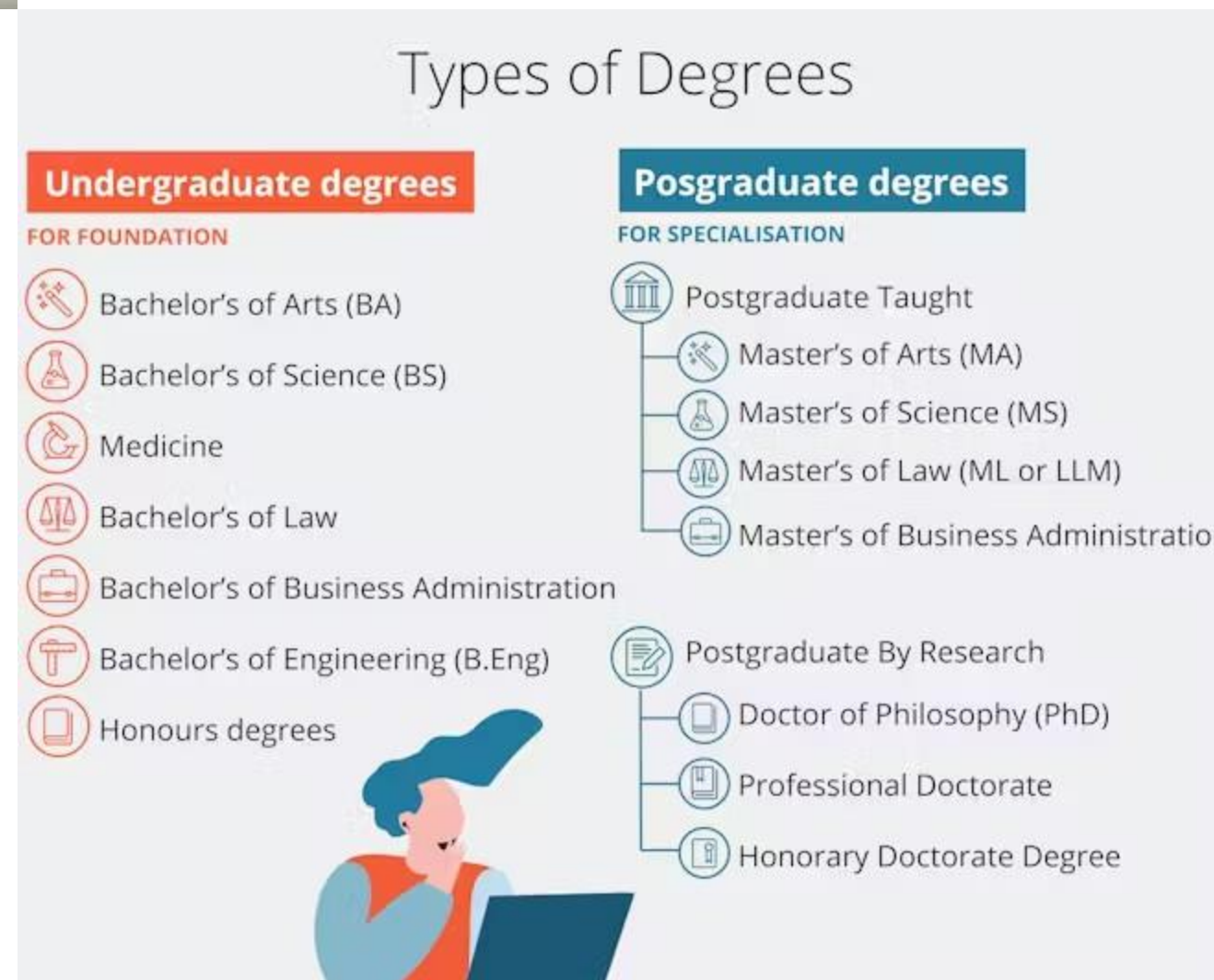
- University-level qualification (usually 3–4 years for a Bachelor's).
- Offers in-depth study in a chosen subject.
- Required for careers like Medicine, Law, Teaching - but not all jobs!

Costs & Funding

- Tuition fees: up to £9,250/year.
- Repay 9% of income over £25,000.
- Interest: RPI only (3.2% for 2025–26).
- Loans cancel after 40 years.
- Maintenance support available (means-tested).

Application Timeline

- 2 Sept 2025: UCAS applications open.
- 15 Oct 2025: Deadline for Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Vet.
- New UCAS format: 3 short questions instead of a personal statement.



UK DEGREE CLASSIFICATION

First Class	Upper Second Class	Lower Second Class	Third Class
70% +	60-69%	50-59%	40-49%

Money, Debt & Pay

University

- Tuition fees: Up to £9,250/year.
- Living costs: Accommodation, travel, food, etc.
- Delay in earning full-time income.

Apprenticeships

- You earn while you learn.
- No tuition fees—training funded by employer/government.
- Access to student discounts.
- Consider travel and living costs.

Free Education Routes (16 - 18)

- A Levels, T Levels, College: No tuition fees at state-funded providers.
- Can take part-time work alongside studies.
- Check for bursaries or free course lists.



Student Loans

(University)

Repayment Terms

- Repay 9% of income over £25,000.
- Payments start only when earning above threshold.
- Loan is written off after 40 years.

Interest Rates

- Interest charged at RPI only (Retail Price Index).
- RPI for 2025–26: 3.2%.

Maintenance Support

- Means-tested support for living costs.
- Additional bursaries and scholarships may be available.





JOB SECURITY & PROGRESSION

What Makes a Career Secure?

Progression Pathways

Questions to Ask Yourself

What Makes a Career Secure?



Industry Growth

- Choose sectors with rising demand (e.g., tech, healthcare, green energy).
- Use job profiles to check if roles are expanding or shrinking.

Transferable Skills

- Skills like communication, problem-solving, and digital literacy are valuable across many careers.
- These make it easier to switch roles or industries if needed.

Future-Proofing

- Ask: Will this job still exist in 10–20 years?
- Avoid roles at high risk of automation.
- Look for careers that adapt with technology and change.

Progression Pathways



Explore Career Ladders

- Use National Careers Service job profiles to see:
- Entry routes
- Salary bands
- Progression opportunities

Occupational Maps

- Show how qualifications link to jobs in sectors like:
- Digital, Construction, Health & Science

Employer-Approved Qualifications

- Prioritise:
- Apprenticeships
- T Levels
- Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)
- These are built with industry input and lead to real jobs.

Questions to Ask Yourself



Is this industry growing?

Will there be more jobs in the future?

Does this career have clear progression routes?

Can I move up with experience or further training?

Are the skills I'll learn transferable?

Can I use them in other roles or sectors?

Will this job still be relevant in 10–20 years?

Is it safe from automation or major changes?

Does this career match my interests and strengths?

Will I stay motivated and committed long term?

Steps To Take

Ages 13 – 14 (Years 9 – 10)

Explore Interests

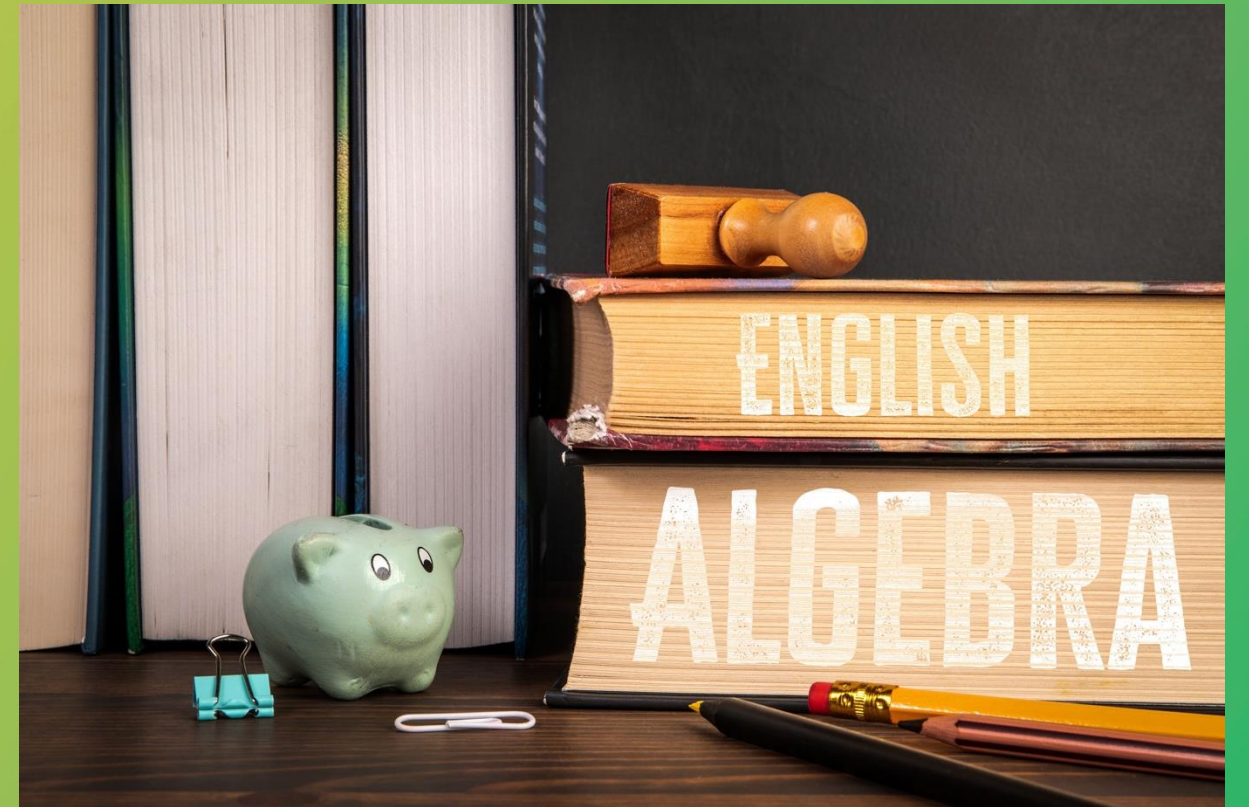
- Pick 3 careers and read job profiles (entry routes, salary, hours, progression).
- Keep notes on what excites you.

Focus on Core Subjects

- Prioritise English & Maths—they're essential for most future routes.

Get Exposure

- Join clubs, try online taster courses, or volunteer.
- Start building confidence and transferable skills..



Steps To Take

Ages 15 – 16 (Year 11 / Post-GCSE Decisions)

Decide on Your Route

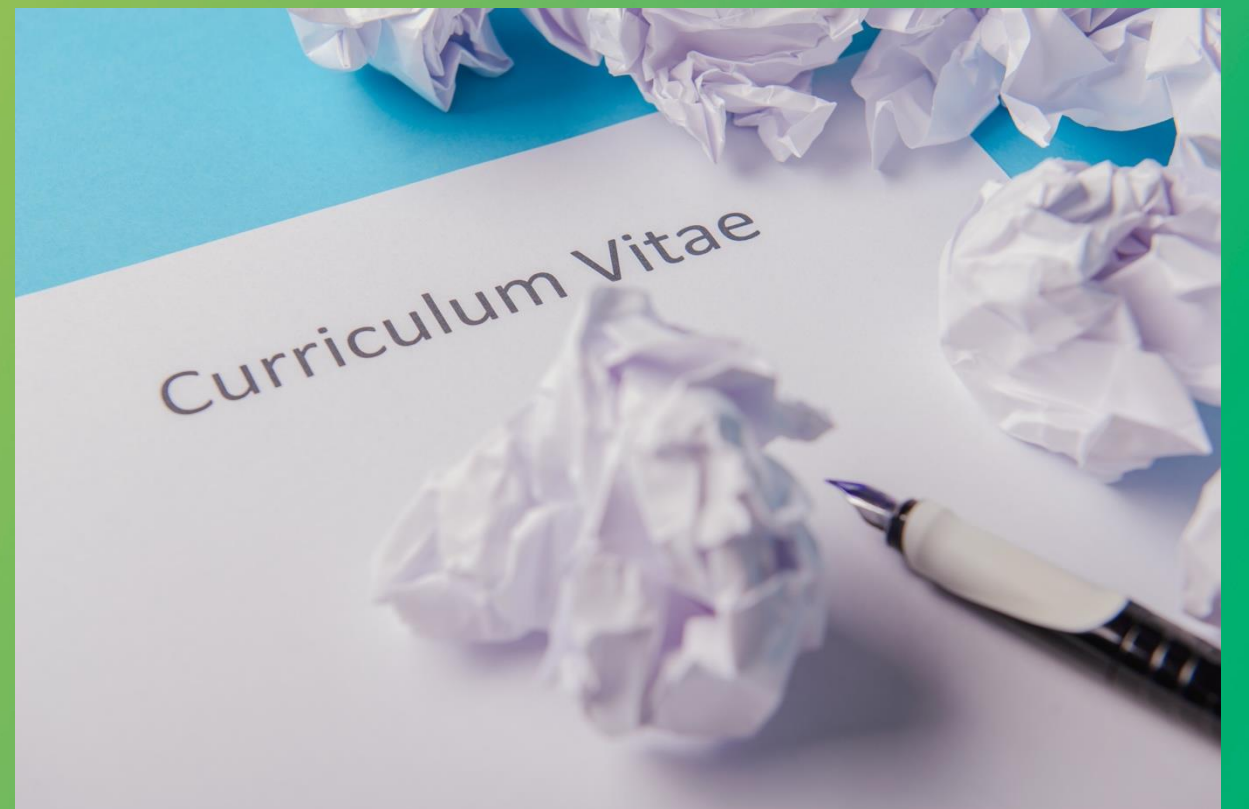
- Choose between A Levels, T Levels, NVQs, or Apprenticeships.

Visit Providers

- Attend open days at colleges/sixth forms.
- Ask about work experience, employer links, and success rates.

Prepare CV & Cover Letter

- Especially important if considering apprenticeships.
- Create a “Find an Apprenticeship” account and set alerts.



Steps To Take

Ages 16 – 17 (Year 12)

Compare Pathways

- Degree vs Degree Apprenticeship vs Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs).

Gain Experience

- Secure a placement, part-time job, or virtual work experience.
- Reflect on what you learn.

Start Applications

- If aiming for university: begin UCAS Hub and draft answers to the 3 new questions.
- If aiming for apprenticeships: apply early and tailor your CV.



Steps To Take

Ages 17 – 18 (Year 13)

Final Applications

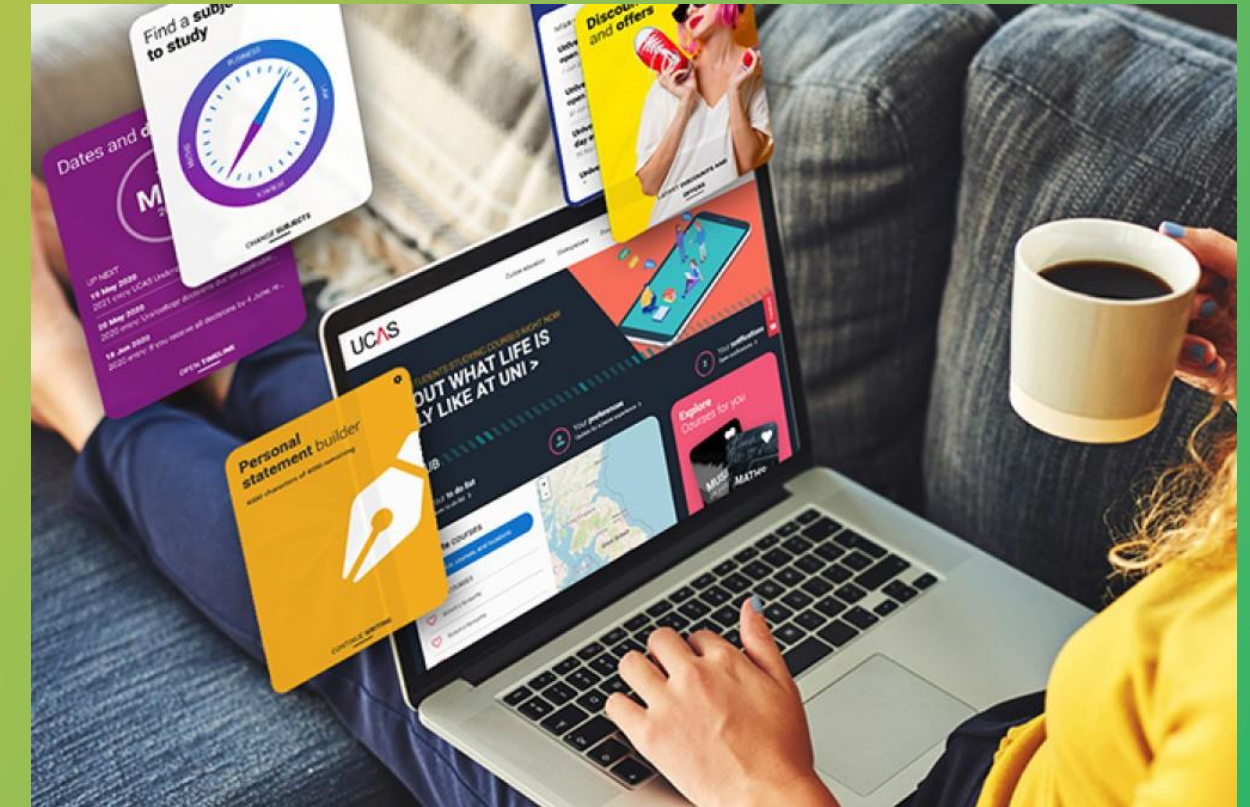
- Submit UCAS from 2 Sept 2025.
- Early deadline for Oxbridge/Medicine/Dentistry/Vet: 15 Oct 2025.

Financial Planning

- For uni: understand student loans, bursaries, and grants.
- For apprenticeships: compare pay vs travel/living costs.

Interview Prep & Labour Market Research

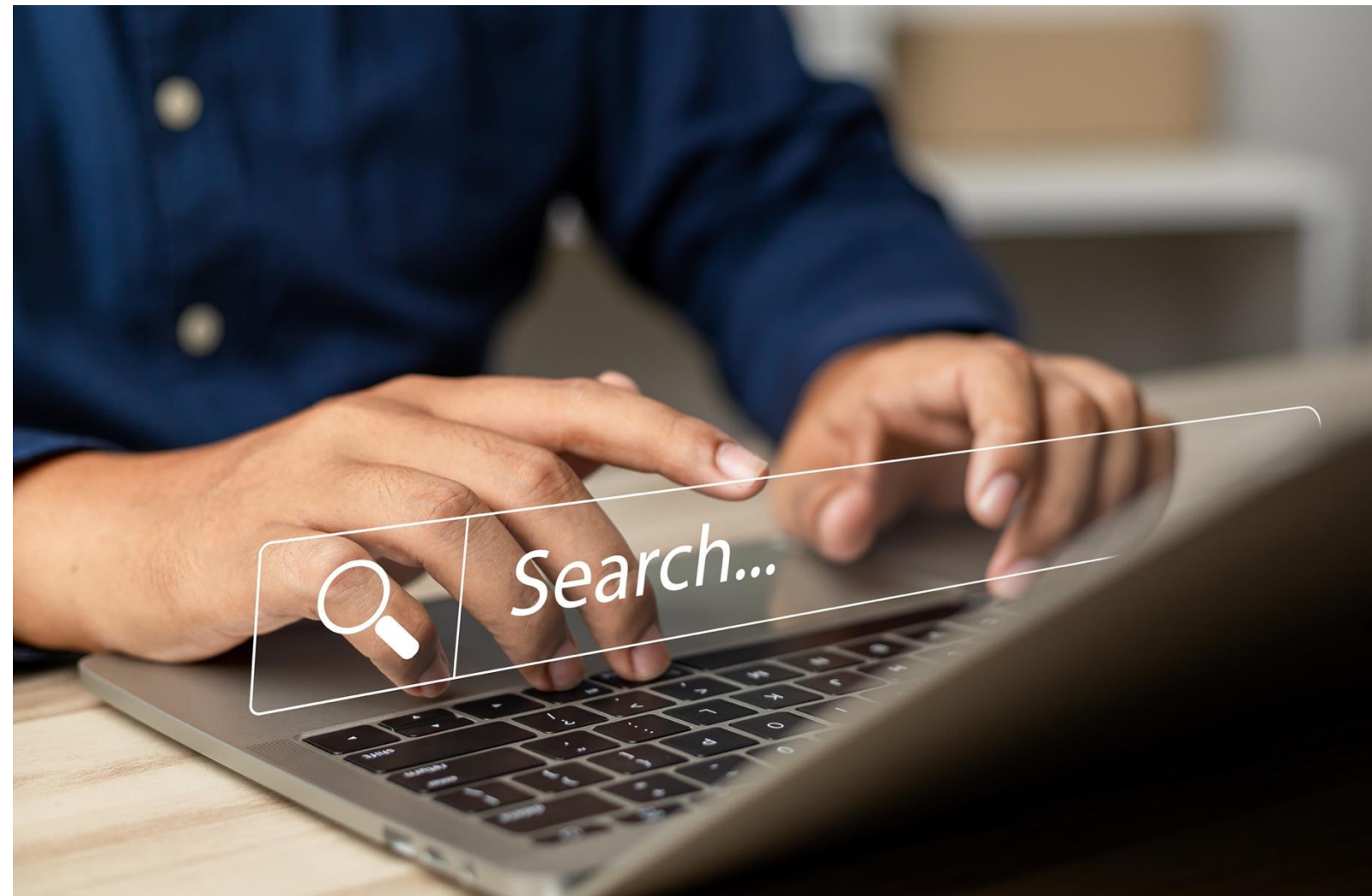
- Use the National Careers Service for mock interviews and local job trends.
- Stay informed and confident.



Quick Route Comparison Table

Route	Big Wins	Watch-Outs	Next Steps
Apprenticeship	Paid job + training, no tuition, employer links	Competitive, fixed hours, less flexibility	Create account on Find an Apprenticeship, draft CV & cover letter, apply early
T Level	Long placement, UCAS points, clear progression	Heavy workload, fewer subject choices	Identify providers, check UCAS tariff, apply via college/sixth form
A Level	Broad subject choice, ideal for academic routes	Less workplace exposure	Choose subjects aligned to goals, plan work experience
NVQ	Competence-based, valued by employers, practical	Less academic content, tied to specific roles	Explore NVQs in your field, check if part of apprenticeship or standalone
Degree	Deep subject study, wide provider choice	Tuition fees, long-term loan repayment	Start UCAS Hub, prep answers, check deadlines and bursaries

Let's do some collective research!



We'll share our screen and walk you through the different resources available, showing you how to explore the opportunities we've discussed — including T Levels, Apprenticeships, NVQs/College, and, of course, Degrees. Please refer to **Slide 26** for the relevant links.

Advice – to me to you



Dealing with Parent Pressure

- Parents want the best for you - include them in your decision-making.
- Share your interests and research to build trust and understanding.

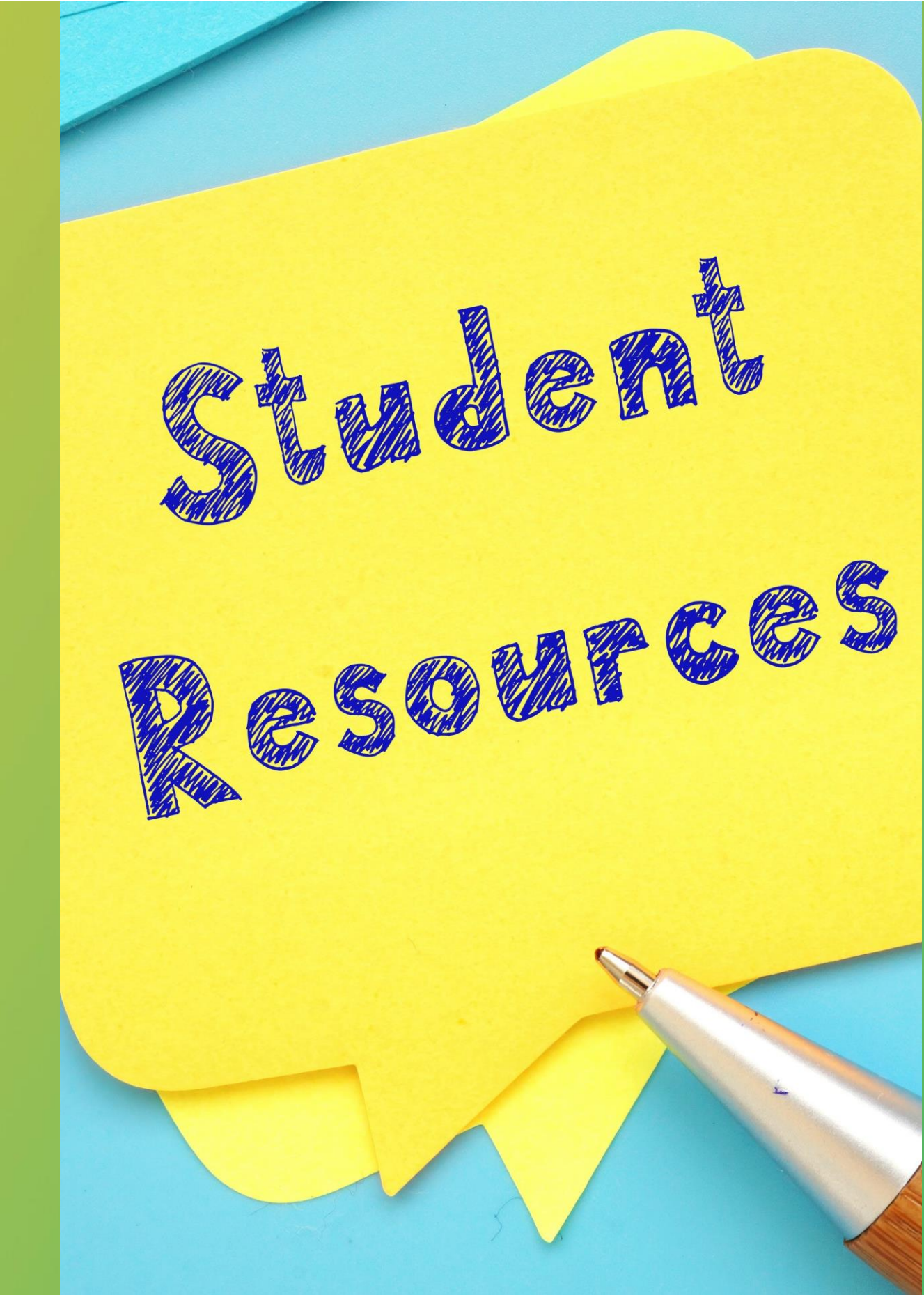
Build a Culture of Hard Work

- Grades matter, but attitude matters more.
- Success comes from consistency, initiative, and effort.

Give Back to Your Community

- Use your skills to support your community.
- Examples: health workshops, mentoring, volunteering, youth engagement.

Resources & References



Student Resources

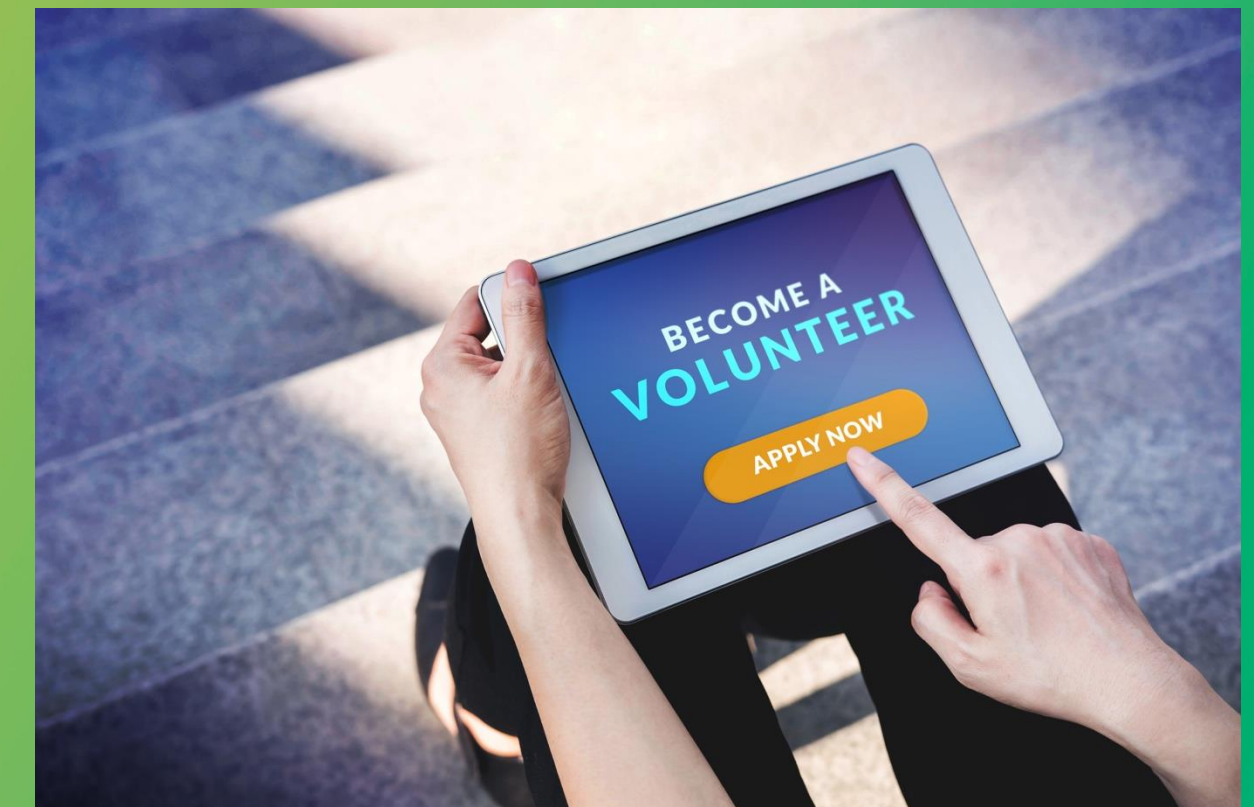
Useful Websites

- **National Careers Service:** Explore job profiles, salaries, and progression - nationalcareers.service.gov.uk
- **UCAS:** Apply for university and degree apprenticeships - ucas.com
- **Find an Apprenticeship:** Search and apply for apprenticeships - findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
- **Skills for Careers:** Learn about A Levels, T Levels, HTQs - skillsforcareers.education.gov.uk
- **Unifrog:** Compare every university course, every apprenticeship, and Further Education courses - then apply successfully – unifrog.org

Volunteering

Opportunities at Ujala Foundation include:

- Health awareness initiatives with qualified Doctors;
- Male and female youth club supervisors;
- Male and female football academy coaching and support;
- Mental health and marriage counselling;
- Personal Trainer sessions for vulnerable community members;
- Food Bank and social welfare projects
- Maintenance work and upkeep of grounds/premises
- Become an Ujala Ambassador and select a youth leadership project;
 - Education & Faith Development
 - Sports & Recreation
 - Youth Engagement & Mentorship
 - Media, Creativity & Communications
 - Leadership & Development
 - Community Outreach & Service



ANY
QUESTIONS
?

Want to get in touch?



Get in touch
instantly.

Dr Hussain Mahmood

- TikTok/Instagram: @dr_hussain17



Humza Mahmood

- humzamahmood19@hotmail.co.uk
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That's all folks!

Thank you for listening.